**WILD WEATHER**
Go to MiamiHerald.com for a video report and the latest weather conditions.

**Wet, windy storm pummels East**

A violent storm brought flooding and high winds to the East, tying up transportation and trapping some people in their homes.

By Karen Putz

NEW YORK — A powerful nor’easter pounded the East with wind and pouring rain Sunday, grounding air traffic and threatening to create some of the worst coastal flooding ever seen in more than a decade.

The storm flooded people out of their homes in the middle of the night in West Virginia. Other inland states faced a threat of heavy rain. Heavy rains and thunderstorm washed out Florida’s Turnpike near the coast in New England.

In the South, wind gusts to 71 mph in Charleston, S.C., the weather service said. Other inland states faced a threat of heavy rain. Heavy rains and thunderstorms caused from Florida’s Turnpike to the coast in New England.

The storm forced the canning of five major league baseball games Sunday and gave warnings today for possible flooding. The storm moved to the north, bringing heavy rain and gusty winds.

**WHAT’S THE IDEAL TAX SYSTEM FOR FLORIDA?**

Expansion of the sales tax may provide the best future for Florida, many experts said, because an income tax isn’t politically feasible and property tax proposals have too many problems.

By John Burnam

By default, the long-scrutinized sales tax may be the best future for Florida. It has the ability to bring in billions — perhaps trillions of dollars in revenue without raising the basic tax rate.

That’s a quick summation of the views of tax experts, veteran politicians and members of a newly formed tax commission when asked what the best tax structures for Florida for the decades ahead.

As many people walk away from sales tax formulas on this last day before the deadline, others are looking at the tax disaster looming at the state and local level, particularly with skyrocketing property taxes.

Everyone agrees something must be done.

“We need to modernize our tax system for the 21st century,” said Dionicio Calano, chief executive of the advocacy organization Florida Tax Watch, and a leader in supporting a由此 expanded sales tax. “But we need to do it in a way that does not kill the goose that laid the egg of our economy.”

**COLOMBIA**

Payoffs to terrorists scrutinized

Chiquita Brands International is just one of several U.S.-based companies paying foreign payoffs to help fight terrorism, according to a recent government assessment.

By John Burnam

BOGOTA — Chiquita Brands International’s recent admissions that it paid off a Colombian drug ring to halt kidnappings are just the latest in a string of admissions by international companies, including Colacito-based Coca-Cola and the Alabama-based coal company Drummond Co., that they paid off terrorists.

The drug ring worked with the same group to kill several trade unionists, but the guilty parties Chiquita, Colacito and Colacito are also businesses with a long and infamous history in Latin America.

**RUSSIA**

Arrests at Putin protest

Opposition leader in St. Petersburg, Russia, Vladimir Putin, has succeeded in silencing his critics. In Moscow, the protesters were dispersed by the police after they tried to march to the Russian parliament.

By John Burnam

ST.PETERSBURG, Russia — Nikolai Glushkov, a top aide to Russian President Vladimir Putin, has been arrested in the wake of the protests. Glushkov is one of the leaders of a group called The Other Russia, opposed to the authoritarian regime of the Russian president.

Police clubbed and arrested several demonstrators during the march. Story, 1A.

**STREETWISE**

By Larry Lebowitz

MAKE OVER MAY EASE TOLL LANES

The way you pay to use Florida’s Turnpike is going to look and feel a lot different in the near future when electronic tolling is introduced to South Florida.

The traditional toll booths are being demolished and the lanes dramatically reconfigured to allow for higher-tech, electronic toll collections and line-shifting.

Construction recently started on site for this conversion — on the European first-class Service Road in Broward County. At the intersection of State Road 800 and the Sawgrass Expressway in Hollywood, Fla., the entire model station for Miami-Dade will be ready in the spring.

Drivers can easily convert the turnpike and most of the highways in South Florida to an all-electronic toll system.

The state plans to entirely convert the turnpike by 2011 and most of the highways in South Florida by 2015.
**COLONIA**

Chiquita casts light on terrorist payoffs

**STORMWarnings**

Wet storm pounds the East

**CYNAMAGENTA**

**NEW TOLL SYSTEM**

New system sidelines cash toll payers

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